

Air Power

Quote of the Week

“Air power is like poker. A second-best hand is like none at all – it will cost you dough and win you nothing.”
– **George Kenney**

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Mission status:

(As of Nov. 27)

Days ahead or behind with mission capable rate

T-37	-0.28	84.5%
T-1	+0.8	80.8%
T-38	-0.074	69.3%

Countdown to ORI:

2 days

Bush signs defense bill

By Staff Sgt. A.J. Bosker

Air Force Print News

WASHINGTON – President Bush signed the fiscal 2003 National Defense Authorization Act into law Monday at the Pentagon.

The NDAA authorizes the Department of Defense to spend \$375 billion to continue the transformation of the military to face future challenges and to fight the global war on terrorism. More than one-fourth of that amount, \$94 billion, will go to support personnel programs and quality-of-life initiatives.

According to the president, the NDAA rewards the service and sacrifice of the nation's military members and their families with higher pay, improved facilities and better housing.

It also ensures servicemembers have the best equipment, the most advanced weapons, supports operations and maintenance, and continues investments in missile defense and new technologies to give America's

See 'Bill,' page 6



Photo by Airman 1st Class Yvonne Conde

Testing all dogs...

Staff. Sgt. Adolph Rodriguez, 47th Security Forces Squadron military working dog handler, leads Kelly, an explosive-detector working dog, through her annual certification test. (See story page 9)

Laughlin takes AETC food service award

By Airman 1st Class

Yvonne Conde

Staff writer

Laughlin's Chaparral Dining Facility recently won the Air Education and Training Command Food Service Excellence Award and will go on to represent the command in the Air Force Hennessy Award competition scheduled for early next year.

As a result of winning at command level, Laughlin will receive \$10,000 to further improve operations to compete against the other

Air Force commands for the best food service program in the single-facility category in the U.S. Air Force.

“The Chaparral Dining Facility will improve because of the AETC award,” said Ana Rey, SelRico Services assistant manager. “We are motivated to be the best. Winning the Hennessy award will allow us to hold the topmost recognition.”

The dining facility here won because the topnotch professionals and experts are dedicated to providing

superior customer service, said 2nd Lt. Monica Mahoney, 47th Services Division food service officer. “Most of all, it was because of Team XL and the continuous base wide support we receive from the top down.”

The dining facility will have less than two months to get ready for the Air Force competition, which is scheduled for January through February. Lieutenant Mahoney said it is based on the entire scope of an

See 'Award,' page 4



Commanders' Corner

Col. Dan Woodward
47th Flying Training Wing commander

Team XL – ready for the ORI

Team XL....the ORI is here....and we are ready! Ready to show the pride, dedication and commitment that makes us the world's best wing at training the world's best pilots. Period!

Last fiscal year, we launched more sorties than any wing, flew more flying hours than any wing, maintained a larger aircraft fleet than any wing and ran the third busiest airfield in the United States Air Force. Last year we deployed 94 members of

Team XL to the Middle East and throughout the world in support of Operations Enduring Freedom, Northern and Southern Watch, Operation Joint Forge in Bosnia and other combat operations. And last year, we built the greatest Air Force in the history of the world, one person at a time with your skill, professionalism and energy. It is time to show the Inspector General that Team XL is truly... "Outstanding."

As I traveled around the wing over the past few weeks looking at final preparations, pride was pouring through. Each and every one of you deserves credit for all you have done and I sincerely thank you...your commitment shows.

To Staff Sgt. Elizabeth Smith from the 47th Aeromedical Dental Squadron, for single-handedly reorganizing the Medical Group's Education and Training Office as well as the Wing's Self Aid and Buddy Care Program – thank you.

To Ms. Sabrina Pena of the 47th Mission Support Squadron, who earned the 2002 Air Force Distin-

guished Equal Employment Opportunity Award by successfully mediating 15 cases ranging from reassignments to work place accommodations.

Your efforts enabled Laughlin to keep 15 productive employees on board without incurring the additional costs of recruiting and retraining new employees. Thank you.

To Mr. Neal Mihelich from the 47th Maintenance Directorate who was named AETC 2002 Air Force Association Wage Grade Civilian. Mr. Mihelich significantly improved productivity in the T-37 flight and was an instrumental player in the T-6 site activation. Your hard work and initiatives also contributed to the directorate winning the AETC Maintenance Effectiveness Award for the Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Category. Thank you.

To Master Sgt. David Doan from the 47th Operations Support Squadron who is spearheading the training program for the Air Force's newest Radar Approach Control and Tower Control system, set to go on-line at Laughlin in January. Sergeant Doan is currently the only air traffic controller at Laughlin certified in both the RAPCON and control tower. He is responsible for 78 controllers in training on three new systems. Thank you.

To 2nd Lt. James Oberg and Staff Sgt. Bridgette Chrisman of the 47th Comptroller Flight for leading the team effort between the accounting liaison office and resource advisors across the wing. Your efforts reduced interest penalty payments to a consistently low level, including an unprecedented \$0.00 in interest payments in April 2002. Thank you.

These members of Team XL are just six examples of some 2,500 people committed to making Laughlin shine. The fact is, people always have been and always will be the difference between organizations that succeed and those that do not. And here at Laughlin, we win because our team is loaded with winners just like you. So Team XL, put the final spit shine on your programs, extend a welcoming hand to the IG and show them precisely what we are made of. "Outstanding." Period!

Laughlin airman rejoins the Air Force

By 2nd Lt. Richard Holtzman
47th Operations Support Squadron

Oct. 20, 1999, was the day I started my terminal leave. I volunteered 10 1/2 years of my life to the U.S. Air Force and my obligation had come to an end.

Throughout my career, I had developed many friendships and learned to love my job and responsi-

bilities in the Air Force. I enjoyed my years in the military, but was ready to pursue my dreams and better the opportunities of my family as a civilian air traffic controller in the Federal Aviation Administration.

It was difficult for me to leave the "family" I had grown to love and respect, but I understood there were better opportunities elsewhere. As

we left Beale Air Force base, I realized I was leaving the best friends I ever had, but knew I had prepared well for my future. As we arrived in North Carolina, we were fortunate enough to have family who opened their homes to us during our transition. My date of separation was Dec.

See 'Rejoin,' page 3



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Deadlines, Advertising

News for the Border Eagle should be submitted to the 47th Flying Training Wing Public Affairs Office, Bldg. 338, Laughlin AFB, TX, 298-5262. **Copy deadline is close of business each Thursday the week prior to publication.**

Advertising should be submitted to the Del Rio News-Herald, 2205 Bedell, Del Rio, TX, 774-4611. Advertising should be submitted by 4 p.m. each Friday.

Submissions can be e-mailed to: **timothy.stein@laughlin.af.mil** or **yvonne.conde@laughlin.af.mil**.

‘Rejoin,’ from page 2

19, 1999, and on Dec. 17, I got a phone call I would never forget. Two weeks before I was to start working at Norfolk International Airport, the FAA initiated a hiring freeze. Though I had completed the required forms, I had not started working, and thus, was out of a job. I was also turning 31 in two months, making me too old to be hired by the FAA to be a controller. During my terminal leave, my son got sick. While I was receiving “authorization” from Tricare to see a civilian doctor, I began thinking about when I was active duty. I immediately began looking for healthcare for my family and found out it would cost over \$1,700 every three months to receive the same coverage I enjoyed in the Air Force. While I was in the Air Force, I

would only have to notify my supervisor if a family member or I was sick, and normally I could spend a little time with them as they got better. The Air Force was concerned about my family and me. I guess there are still benefits in the military. Missing the job I’d grown to love, I began speaking with recruiters to return to the Air Force. The first question the recruiter asked me was, “What career field was I looking to return to?” Fortunately for me, ATC was short manned and this was a job that was accepting prior enlisted controller’s back. Apparently, not all Air Force specialties will allow prior active members to return. The second question asked was, “Did you take your last Weighted Airman Promotion System test?” I had – even though I knew I would be separating six months later. If you turn down

WAPS testing, you are turning down promotion, thus, the opportunity to re-enlist, making yourself ineligible to return to active duty. Once you separate from the Air Force, you have to be out for at least 90 days before you can return to active duty. However, it took 120 days to return to active duty even after submitting a waiver to the 90 day requirement. I then had to go to the Military Entrance Processing Station for a battery of tests to ensure I was fit to join the military. The intent of this letter is not to ask that you re-enlist or stay in the military. If you have devoted four, ten or fifteen years of honorable service to the defense of our country and wish to separate, I salute you, and say thank you very much. I only ask that you take care of yourself and your family, and not to burn any bridges and make sure you fully un-

derstand what to expect. I was lucky, being unemployed for four months and trying to support a family, I could not have done this without the support of my wife and family. One regret I had, was not being able to complete my college degree while I was in the military. After being accepted back onto active duty, I decided to complete my college degree through evening classes. I then applied to Officer Training School and was accepted. I am very thankful for the family and friends that stood by me through the many difficult times. I would encourage anyone, regardless of your plans, to take advantage of the benefits the military has to offer. Go to school, get your degree, whether you plan on staying in our getting out. Be prepared, because you never know what hand you could be dealt.



Col. Dan Woodward
47th Flying Training
Wing commander

Actionline
Call 298-5351

This column is one way to work through problems that haven't been solved through normal channels. By leaving your name and phone number, you are assured of a timely personal reply. It's also very useful in case more information is needed in order to pursue your inquiry. If you give your name, we will make every at-

tempt to ensure confidentiality when appropriate. If your question relates to the general interest of the people of Laughlin, the question and answer may also be printed in the Border Eagle. Before you call the Actionline, please try to work the problem out through the normal chain of command or directly with the base agency involved. Thanks for your cooperation, and I look forward to reading some quality ideas and suggestions.

AAFES	298-3176
Accounting and Finance	298-5204
Civil Engineer	298-5252
Civilian Personnel	298-5299
Commissary	298-5815
Dormitory manager	298-5213
Equal Employment Opportunity	298-5879
FWA hotline	298-4170
Hospital	298-6311
Housing	298-5904
Information line	298-5201
Legal	298-5172
Military Equal Opportunity	298-5400
Military Personnel	298-5073
Public Affairs	298-5988
Security Forces	298-5900
Services	298-5810

Time Off Award

Comment: I’d like to ask the Commander if he could tell us about custodians and civilians on base concerning goal days. Aircraft maintenance gets a goal day after Thanksgiving and Christmas every year, but the rest of us civilian’s on base don’t! It seems unfair, especially in preparation for the IG. Answer: Let me clarify that what you are talking about in

this case is not a “Goal Day”, but a “Time Off Award.” An employee has up to twelve months to use a Time Off Award, but many choose to use their time-off award during the Thanksgiving and Christmas time period. First and foremost, it is used to recognize a superior accomplishment or personal effort that contributes to the quality, efficiency, or economy of government operations. Nomination for each award must be supported by written justification and

certification signed by the recommending official, who could be a first level supervisor, or someone at a higher level in the individual’s chain of command. The Director of Maintenance submitted two Time Off Award nominations for the civilians in his unit who dedicated tremendous time and effort to close out the flying hour program, and for their contributions to winning the AETC Maintenance Effectiveness Award. Because of your call, I’ve de-

cided to extend the flying hour and fiscal year closeout Time Off Award to all 47 FTW civilian employees. The wing flew in excess of 100,000 hours last year. It was a total team effort to accomplish this feat, and one that was made possible by all wing civilians. Bottom line: You are right! Thanks for the call and for all that you and our other civilian members do everyday to ensure Laughlin continues to XL!

Interested in the Air Force?
Call Del Rio’s Air Force recruiter at 774-0911.

‘Award,’ from page 1

installation’s food service program exhibiting excellence in management effectiveness, force readiness support, food quality, employee and customer relations, resource conservation, training, and safety awareness.

In May, the National Restaurant Association will present the winning team the Hennessy award trophy in Chicago. “We look forward to competing at the Air Force level,” said Lieutenant Mahoney. “Our motto in services is ‘think Hennessy’ and this has been our goal and vision all year.”

**Interested in the
Air Force?**
*Call Del Rio’s Air
Force recruiter at
774-0911.*



Photo by Airman Timothy J. Stein

**Perfect
slice...**

Col. Dan Woodward, 47th Flying Training Wing commander, carves up a turkey Nov. 28, at the Chaparral Dining Facility for members of Laughlin staying on base for Thanksgiving. The colonel and other base leaders took time out of their holiday to serve a traditional Thanksgiving dinner to Laughlin airmen.

ORI preparation

The *Border Eagle* offers tips to help Laughlin members prepare for the Operational Readiness Inspection, which takes place in 3 days.

Take responsibility: If a write-up is found, take corrective action on the spot if possible, that night if needed, and then show the inspector what you have done. A sure sign that a shop has problems is if you try to blame a more junior member for a write-up. The inspector general goes after this with a vengeance.

Take the lead when an inspector arrives: Don’t ask, “What do you want to see?” Show him your completed self-inspection binder, and then immediately begin to showcase your people, your mission, your awards, your self-help projects and your plans for future improvements. Remember to practice your briefing in front of others that are familiar with your people and your section. They may remind you of one award or benchmark area that you are not including.

Aerospace scholarship

Spouses of Air Force active-duty, Air National Guard or Air Force Reserve members, can apply for the Air Force Spouse Scholarship now through Jan. 31. The scholarship will be awarded in March and may be used to pay for any reasonable costs related to pursuing a degree. Thirty scholarships will be awarded.

Newslines

For on-line application and further information, please contact Aerospace Education Foundation at aefstaff@aef.org or call 1-800-291-8480.

Blood drive

The South Texas Blood and Tissue Center is holding a blood drive from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. today in room 2210 of Anderson Hall. All donors will receive a free t-shirt.

For more information, call 298-5495.

Park University

Registration for the spring term at Park University is Monday through Jan. 3. Late registration and the first day of class is Jan. 6.

For more information, call 298-5593.

Transition assistance

The Family Support Center has counseling services to help civil service employees leaving federal employment or changing careers. The counseling services can help increase employment opportunities through education, information and personal interviews.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, call 298-5620.

Burger King hours

The Burger King at the base exchange has new hours starting Monday. It will now be open Monday through Friday from 6 a.m. till 6 p.m. and Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Uniform of the day

The uniform of the day for Monday through Dec. 17 will be battle dress uniform or flight suits.

Access channel

The slide format for the commander’s access channel, cable television channel 34, has changed. Slides should be in power-point format and may now contain graphics, but no animation.

For details, call Deanna Norton at 298-5988.

Base firing range

The Laughlin small arms firing range is off limits to unauthorized personnel and should be considered dangerous at all times. Trespassing in the range area is illegal.

Anyone needing access to the firing range area should call 298-5151 during duty hours and 298-5100 during non duty hours.



Photo by Army Spc. Alfredo Jimenez Jr.

Despite being away from home for Thanksgiving, the troops at forward deployed locations, such as Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, were able to enjoy a traditional Thanksgiving meal.

Troops celebrate Thanksgiving in Afghanistan

By Capt. Tim Beninato
428th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – While millions of Americans gathered around tables Thanksgiving day for a traditional holiday feast, so too did the thousands of servicemembers supporting Operation Enduring Freedom at military bases across Afghanistan and Uzbekistan.

But instead of finding family and friends seated at the table, the servicemembers here found themselves surrounded by fellow soldiers, airmen, sailors and Marines, sharing their traditional meal with their brothers and sisters in arms from foreign nations.

While grandma’s 50 years of cooking experience made preparing a feast for 10 to 15 family members a small undertaking, feeding more than 14,000 Coalition servicemembers was a monumental task.

Traditional Thanksgiving meals include turkey, ham, potatoes, stuffing, various vegetable dishes and plenty of scrumptious desserts, and for the troops here, this year’s Thanksgiving feast was no different.

Over the days leading up to Thanksgiving, military and civilian cooks worked tirelessly to prepare thousands of tons of food to feed America’s fighting forces. Cooks prepared more than 14,663 pounds of beef, 13,400 pounds of ham, 5,168 pounds of shrimp and more than 8,491 pounds of turkey. In addition, troops found hundreds of bushels of fresh fruits displayed across tables next to varying types of hot and tasty bread and rolls.

After washing down a satisfying meal with a warm cup of coffee, troops found selecting their dessert a difficult task. If they couldn’t settle on just one piece of pumpkin, pecan, sweet po-

tato, cherry or apple pie, or a slice of cheese cake or cup of ice cream, they surely went back for a seconds.

History has taught us the importance of food and its effects on the morale of a nation’s fighting forces. French Gen. Napoleon Bonaparte knew this to be true when he uttered those memorable words that “an army marches on its stomach.” And celebrated Texan and American patriot, William Cowper Brann said “No man can be a patriot on an empty stomach.”

This year as family and friends enjoyed their holiday day meal and gave thanks for the many blessings in their lives, they were also thankful that America’s fighting forces supporting Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan were enjoying a Thanksgiving feast of their own.

(Courtesy of Air Force Print News)

‘Bill,’ from page 1

military every advantage on the battlefields of the future.

“America’s military is strong, and that’s the way it should be,” Bush said. “Our nation and world are safer that way. Now and in the future, we will maintain a military that is second to none.”

As part of this year’s overall defense budget, the Air Force was authorized \$28.3 billion for the procurement of aircraft, missiles and ammunition; \$33.7 billion in operation and maintenance funds for the active-duty force, Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard; \$389 million for environmental restoration; \$1.3 billion in military construction; and \$684 million in family housing construction.

The highlights of the bill include:

- Fully funding an across-the-board 4.1 percent military pay raise with targeted increases of up to 6.5 percent for mid-grade and senior non-commissioned officers.
- Reducing the out-of-pocket housing expenses from the current 11.3 percent to 7.5 percent in fiscal 2003, eventually eliminating the out-of-pocket costs by fiscal 2005.
- Expanding TRICARE Prime Remote benefits to family members who remain at a remote location when they cannot accompany the military member on a new assignment or duty. It also extended these benefits to family members of remotely located air reserve component members when they are ordered to active duty for more than 30 days.

- Extending several special pays and bonuses through December 2003, including enlistment and reenlistment bonuses. It also permits the service secretaries to award an incentive pay of up to \$1,500 per month to military members serving in assignments involving difficult working conditions or undesirable overseas locations.
- Doubling the regular basic allowance for subsistence for single enlisted airmen stationed in remote locations without adequate availability of meals from a government messing facility.
- Creating a new payment for all military retirees who were wounded in combat and received the Purple Heart and those who were severely disabled in combat-related incidents. Monthly payments would range from

\$103 to \$2,100 each month, depending on the level of disability, and would represent a partial to full offset of the reduction in retired pay required by the current law on concurrent receipt.

“The men and women of our military bring credit to our flag and security to our country,” Bush said. “On behalf of the American people, I thank you for all you’ve done (and) for all you will do in the cause of freedom and the cause of peace.”

The annual defense budget comprises two parts – the appropriations bill, which the president signed on Oct. 23, and the authorization bill. The appropriations bill allocates funds to operate the Defense Department. The authorization bill permits DOD to spend the allocated funds.



Raptor program on track despite challenges

WASHINGTON (AFPN) — Despite recent changes in the F/A-22 Raptor program, the aircraft’s future remains bright, Air Force officials said recently.

Service officials recently announced they were appointing two new senior F/A-22 program officials soon after learning that there could be potential cost overruns, up to \$690 million, in the engineering, manufacturing and development phase of the program.

Brig. Gen. Richard B. H. Lewis and Col. Thomas J. Owen were selected to take over the program because they have the right operational requirements expertise and technical backgrounds to bring the F/A-22 program into its next phase by the summer of 2003, according to Dr. James G. Roche, secretary of the Air Force.

General Lewis, currently the director of the Joint Theater Air and Missile Defense Organization at the Pentagon, will become the new program executive officer for fighters and bombers at the Pentagon, replacing Brig. Gen. William J. Jabour.

Colonel Owen, selected for promotion to brigadier general, currently is the system program director of the C-17 Globemaster III program for the Aeronautical Systems Center at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. He will become the system program director for the F/A-22, also located at Wright-Patterson AFB, replacing Brig. Gen. Mark D. Shackelford.

“Jay Jabour and Mark Shackelford are extremely committed officers who helped manage the program during a very challenging

period of testing and development.” said Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John P. Jumper.

However, because of demands on the program schedule plus the Air Force’s overall intent to align major acquisition efforts closely with operational acumen, Roche, Jumper and Dr. Marvin R. Sambur determined that new leadership was necessary to achieve the service’s objectives. Sambur is assistant secretary of the Air Force for acquisition at the Pentagon.

Sambur appointed a team of technical and financial experts to investigate the reports of a potential cost overrun in the EMD phase of the F/A-22 program.

The team of industry and Air Force experts, lead by Jon S. Ogg, director of the ASC’s engineering

and technical management directorate at Wright-Patterson AFB, will report their initial findings to Air Force leaders in the coming weeks.

The potential overrun appears to be related to meeting the developmental schedule on budget and not associated with the aircraft’s technology or performance.

“The F/A-22 program is doing very well,” Sambur said. “This exceptional plane is working superbly and we’re meeting or exceeding all performance-related key performance parameters.”

The Raptor has evolved dramatically into a multi-role strike system with broad applications for 21st century warfare as a result of new technologies, doctrine and concepts of operation, according to Roche.

(Courtesy of Air Force Print News)

Vietnam War airman's remains identified

WASHINGTON – The remains of Capt. Francis W. Townsend, previously unaccounted for from the war in Vietnam, have been identified and were buried Dec. 2 in his hometown of Rusk, Texas.

On August 13, 1972, Townsend, a weapons systems officer, and his pilot were flying over Quang Tri Province, North Vietnam. The aircraft was struck by enemy fire, and the pilot was unable to maintain control. He ordered Townsend to eject. Seconds later, the pilot ejected from the burning aircraft and was able to establish radio contact with rescue forces. Unfortunately, he was captured before a rescue could be made.

Following the release of U.S. prisoners of war in 1973, the pilot stated he learned in captivity that Townsend had perished in

the crash though he initially believed he had ejected.

Between 1997 and 1999, joint U.S. and Vietnamese teams, led by the Joint Task Force-Full Accounting, conducted four investigations in the area where Townsend’s plane had crashed. During one of the investigations, the team members were shown the tag of Townsend by a local national.

In July 1998 and May 1999, two full-scale excavations were carried out in Quang Tri Province, where team members of the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii recovered aircraft wreckage, personal crew member artifacts, and human remains. Mitochondrial DNA was extracted from one of the fragments, and was found by lab officials to match the DNA of two of Townsend’s maternal relatives.

drnh
filler

1x2 Animal
House

1x2 1/4
Cinema

3x4 Ricks

Military working dogs trained to detect and deter



Photo by Airman 1st Class Yvonne Conde

Staff Sgt. Che Riley, 47th Security Forces Squadron military dog handler and Dasty, 47th SFS drug-detector MWD, perform a random drug sweep of the education building here Thursday.

By Airman 1st Class Yvonne Conde

Staff writer

Panting with anticipation, the military working dog awaits the command to rush off and perform the job it was trained for. After sniffing a distinct odor, it confidently sits by the obstacles used to conceal the paraphernalia.

The military working dogs assigned to the 47th Security Forces Squadron are the primary means for detecting and deterring explosives and drugs here, said Staff Sgt. Michael Sullivan, 47th SFS kennel master and MWD section NCO in charge. "They are highly trained and qualified in their duties."

According to Sergeant Sullivan, all Air Force MWDs receive their training at Lackland Air Force base

for about six weeks or longer, depending on the dog's performance. There, they learn a passive-response approach, which means they are trained to sit once any significant odors are detected, and are rewarded with a rubber, chewing device, called a Kong.

Once the dogs are fully trained, they are assigned to a unit where they are required to continue MWD proficiency training and pass an annual certification test in the area their area of specialization. "No one military working dog is trained to detect both drugs and explosives," said Sergeant Sullivan. "Reason being, if a dog were to sit while in a building on base, we wouldn't know if we would need to evacuate the building because of a bomb or if drugs are on the premises."

Kelly, a 47th SFS explosive and patrol working dog, passed her annual certification here Tuesday with a score of 100 percent. According to Sergeant Sullivan, this score is a typical rating for the military working dogs here. The explosive detector working dogs must find 95 percent of the aids used in the certification process, and the drug detecting working dogs must find 90 percent of the aids. "If the dogs don't reach that, then we've failed as MWD trainers and handlers," he said.

The base magistrates, Col. Kenneth Smith, 47th Flying Training Wing vice commander, and Lt. Col. Michael Ericksen, 47th Mission Support Group deputy commander, witness each MWD's annual certification. This is done to ensure the dog's capabilities are accurate. The magistrates must certify the MWD annually for it to continue with its daily operations.

"As the wing magistrate, I have the responsibility and pleasure to certify these beautiful animals in both their explosive and drug detection missions," said Colonel Smith. "It never ceases to amaze me how the security forces' dog handlers work, train and reward their dogs. The synergy of each dog team represents countless hours of practice and training. Each team displays the truest meaning of dedication and professionalism."

Once a MWD is assigned to a new handler, they spend at least three to five days together before going to work. "There have been instances where a MWD performs poorly because it isn't comfortable with its handler," said Sergeant Sullivan. "If a dog never had a problem detecting the odors every other time, and it failed to detect it just once, there may be some sort of problem with the dog or the handler. The leash is like an electrical cord, the MWD and handler must build a rapport to successfully work together."

The MWD performance stan-

dards state if any military working dog fails to meet the minimum standards on three consecutive days, without reason, it must enter extensive remedial training. According to Staff Sgt. Michael Kyker, 47th SFS MWD trainer, the magistrates are responsible for determining the outcome of any failed annual certification.

"Since they are involved with each annual certification, and they review all the records, they are familiar with the skills of each and every single one of our dogs," he said. "This is important because if a MWD sits down in front of a door during a random dorm building walk-through, the magistrates may give security forces the authorization to enter and search the premises with reason to believe there may be narcotics housed in the dorm room. They can feel comfortable giving this kind of authorization because they have witnessed the MWDs in action."

According to Staff Sgt. Frank Munderback, 47th SFS MWD assistant trainer, Laughlin hasn't had any drug findings in the past year. "There have been a total of about four in the past decade," he said. "About three of the incidents came from the dorms, another came from a routine base check."

The drug-detector dogs here have also assisted customs with several drug-related incidents.

"They call us for assistance with finding the drugs," said Sergeant Kyker. "We take our dogs out there, find the stuff, and hand it back over to the officials. Our dogs are responsible for some of the major drug busts by the border."

"Laughlin's military working dogs are absolutely amazing to watch," said Colonel Smith. "They are well trained, well cared for, and serve our Air Force both with deployments to Southwest Asia and here locally. The Department of Defense's military working dog program is essential to the safety and security of our men and women in uniform."

The *XLer*

Hometown: Trier, Germany
Family: Husband, Jerret
Time at Laughlin: Nine months
Time in service: One year, one month
Greatest accomplishments: Getting married to my wonderful husband, joining the Air Force and getting my instructor badge
Hobbies: Reading, watching movies and hanging out with friends
Bad habits: Saying “umm” while teaching a class
Favorite musician or band: No Doubt and Tim McGraw
If you could spend one hour with any person, who would it be and why? My great grandmother who died after I was born. I have been told so many great things about her.



Photo by Airman 1st Class Yvonne Conde

Airman Yvonne Watkins
47th Aeromedical Dental Squadron aerospacephysiology apprentice

Chapel Schedule

Catholic

Saturday ● 5 p.m., Mass
Sunday ● 9:30 a.m., Mass
Thursday ● 6 p.m., Choir
Reconciliation ● By appointment
Religious Education

● 11 a.m. Sunday

Jewish

● Call Max Stool at 775-4519

Muslim

● Call Mostafa Salama at 768-9200

Nondenominational

Sunday ● 6:30 p.m. Officer Christian Fellowship, call 298-2238
Friday ● 7 p.m., Unity in Community Fellowship (activities for children)
Monthly ● Women’s fellowship (call 298-1351 for details)

Protestant

Saturday ● 9 a.m., Singles Bible study at the Chaparral Dining facility
Sunday ● 9:30 to 10:30 a.m., Sunday school
● 11 a.m., General worship (blend of contemporary and traditional worship)
Wednesday ● 10 a.m., Women’s Bible study
● 7 p.m., Choir at chapel

Airman shares Afghanistan experience

By Capt. Heather Zwicker

15th Air Base Wing Public Affairs

HICKAM AIR FORCE BASE, Hawaii (AFPN) – Staff Sgt. Matt never expected to live in a mud hut in the middle of Afghanistan, but that is exactly what he did for nearly 140 days.

Matt is a terminal attack controller with the 25th Air Support Operations Squadron at Wheeler Army Airfield, Hawaii. When he deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, the area of operations reminded him of where he grew up in New Mexico – hot, dry, dusty and surrounded by mountains.

Matt was excited about going to Afghanistan.

“After 11 years as a terminal attack controller, I was finally going to get to do my job in a combat target-rich environment,” he said.

While there, Matt was part of a 12-man special forces A-team in which his mission was to provide close-air support, communications and all aspects of fire support including artillery, air drops and other air support.

Although he was the only active-duty Air Force member on the team, he said the experience level was incredible. “Some of the guys fought in Vietnam and the Gulf War,” he said.

“Expect the unexpected” was one of the lessons he learned.

“Most of my training has been to support a large conventional force like the 25th Infantry Division,” Matt said. “In Afghanistan, we were performing unconventional warfare.”

During conventional operations Matt would be working with a large Army unit but during OEF operations he worked with special forces and indigenous forces.

Life in this deployed environment was nothing less than austere. The mud hut was their “safe house” and home base was an old Afghan house in the Hindu Kush mountains. Even though it did have electricity provided by a generator, there was no running water. Everyone would take turns going out to get water for washing up and doing the dishes.

“It was one of three houses in the area that had electricity,” said Matt.

In preparation for his deployment, Matt concentrated on running extra miles and performing additional ruck marches to condition himself for conducting foot patrols at 12,000 feet above sea level. A ruck march usually

includes carrying more than 60 pounds of equipment in a backpack.

“Usually at the ASOS we do physical training five days a week,” said Matt. “We must adhere to the physical fitness standards of both the Army and the Air Force.”

A typical week of physical training would include running at least three miles a day and one ruck march of six to 10 miles.

When not at the safe house or meeting with the locals, a team of eight would go on patrol and usually be gone for five to six days.

“In that amount of time we would cover approximately 500 miles,” said Matt.

Two different types of patrols were conducted, according to Matt, who took part in more than 80 combat patrols. One type was a presence patrol – a show of force where a team would drive through and let the Taliban see them.

“It was sort of like we were saying ‘Hey, don’t start your stuff again or we can respond,’” he said.

Other patrols were part of recovering equipment and capturing people. It also included the clearing of more than 300 caves in their area of operations.

Besides aiding in the capture and extraction of 44 Taliban and al-Qaida forces, he was also responsible for recovering and destroying more than 10 tons of weapons and munitions from Taliban caches.

He described the caches as rather shallow caves, their purpose for storing ammunition and weapons.

“We’d have to be careful because sometimes there were mines or trip wires in the entrance,” he said.

The sergeant said he thinks Afghanistan is a place where things have not changed much in the past 1,000 years. Many things taken for granted in the United States are unknown to the Afghan people. They still farm by hand, harvest wheat with a sickle, herd goats and sheep and draw water by hand.

A popular toy with the children is a stick with a ring on the end. They also make toys from old military trash and weaponry.

Although Matt was glad to be in the comfort of home again, he said he appreciated the experience.

“It’s good to see (Afghan) kids going to school now,” the terminal attack controller said. “We’ve made a difference over there.”

(Courtesy of Pacific Air Forces News Service)

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47th OSS defeats LSI twice, take flag football championship

By Airman 1st Class Timothy J. Stein
Editor

The 47th Operations Support Squadron's flag-football team overcame a first round loss in the double elimination tournament to win the base championship Monday night against Lear Sieglar, Inc.

OSS, who lost to LSI earlier in the playoffs, had to beat the defending champions twice in order to be crowned base champs.

The first game started off looking great for the OSS squad. On their first drive, OSS quarterback Blaine Morgan hit several different receivers while moving the ball 60 yards down the field. Morgan eventually found Freddy Flores in the end zone on a 12-yard strike. A successful extra point put the OSS squad up 7-0.

OSS's defense also came up big for them in the first half. On LSI's fifth offensive play of the game, Morgan picked off LSI quarterback Art Rodriguez. This set up a 40-yard march down the field for another touchdown. Morgan hit Dominic Williams on a 16-yard play for six. OSS converted on the extra-point attempt to bring the score to 14-0.

With only a few minutes left in the half, LSI got the ball back one last time.. With a combination of passing and running, Rodriguez brought his team to OSS's six-yard line. He then threw a bullet to Vince Sanchez for six points. They then converted the extra point to bring the game to within seven at the half.

LSI continued to move the ball offensively in the second half. On their first possession, they moved the ball almost the entire length of the field. A six-yard touchdown pass from Rodriguez to Jesse Reyes capped off the drive. In what turned out to be perhaps the most important play of the game, LSI failed to make the extra point leaving the score at 14-13 in favor of OSS.

OSS extended their lead in the middle of the second half when Williams intercepted a Rodriguez pass and ran it back for a touchdown. A failed extra-point put the score at 20-13 in favor of OSS.

LSI stopped OSS on the next drive, and got

the ball back with enough time to move down the field for another touchdown on a 24-yard Rodriguez run. Down by only one point, LSI needed to convert the extra point to send the game into overtime. Rodriguez's pass into the end zone was dead-on but the receiver failed to hold on to it. OSS inched the game out by one point, 21-20.

After a 20-minute break, game two got underway. This time it was LSI who got off to a fast start. On the first play from scrimmage, Rodriguez hit Eloy Cheves with a 43-yard touchdown pass. LSI failed to convert the extra point however.

OSS tried to get something started on their first possession but ended up turning the ball over to LSI on an interception. LSI now had the ball on OSS's five-yard line looking to extend their lead. Just when OSS needed a defensive play the most, they got one. Bobby Hughes intercepted a Rodriguez pass meant for the end zone and ran it back the entire length of the field for OSS's first score of the game. The score stayed tied at 6-6 when OSS also failed to convert the extra point. It remained tied going into the half.

Hughes got the scoring going early in the second half catching a 22-yard Morgan pass on the first drive. OSS converted the extra point this time to put them up by seven.

The score remained 13-7 for several drives while both defenses stepped up, forcing punts on each side of the ball

LSI eventually tied the game up with a 50-yard touchdown pass from Rodriguez to Reyes and a successful extra point.

With the game tied and time running out, the OSS offense went to work. In a 60-yard drive, which included runs from Morgan for 32 and 15 yards, OSS took the lead for good when Hughes caught a 6-yard pass from Morgan. OSS failed to make the extra point but it wouldn't matter as OSS defenseman Romulo Spiller intercepted a Rodriguez pass for a touchdown on the next drive.

Down by two touchdowns with only seconds left, LSI called the game and congratulated the victorious OSS team. OSS won with a final score of 25-13.

Sportslines

Santa Claus Biathlon

The Santa Claus Biathlon is set for 8 a.m. Dec. 21. There will be a five-kilometer run and an eight-mile bike ride. Sign-up by Dec. 19.

For more information, call 298-5251.

Aerobics programs

The XL Fitness Center has a variety of aerobics programs available throughout the week at different times to suit all fitness levels.

Step, Spin, Cardio Kickboxing and Power Yoga classes are available for Laughlin people to attend. Monday – Friday classes are scheduled at 9 a.m., Monday – Thursday includes a noon and 5:30 p.m. class and Monday and Wednesday Power Yoga is scheduled at 6:30 p.m.

All classes are free and conducted by well informed, certified instructors.

For more information, schedules are available at the XL Fitness Center, or call 298-5251.

Air Force teams

All active-duty members interested in competing for a spot on the Air Force cross country team must submit Air Force Form 303 by Dec. 30. Members interested in wrestling must submit the form by Jan. 17. Members interested in bowling must submit the form by Jan. 20. Forms are available at the fitness center.

For more information, call 298-5251.

XL Fitness Center hours

Monday – Thursday:
5 a.m. to midnight

Friday:
5 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Saturday – Sunday:
9 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Holidays:
10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

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